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Allen Dulles and Bang-Jensen

AN EDITORIAL

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THOMAS MOLNAR • E. MERRILL ROOT • M. STANTON EVANS
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Not long after the Russian suppression of the 1956 Hungarian revolt, certain Soviet citizens working at United Nations headquarters in New York wished to defect to the United States. To that end they sought the aid of the only UN official whom they unqualifiedly trusted: Povl Bang-Jensen, of whose discretion in relation to the Hungarian freedom-fighter witnesses they were cognizant.

These Soviet citizens asked Povl Bang-Jensen to act as their intermediary in arranging with the United States Government the kind of sanctuary that the Canadian Government had afforded Igor Gouzenko, when he defected from the Soviet embassy in Ottawa. The would-be defectors at the UN at first insisted that Bang-Jensen should discuss the matter with the President of the United States. They laid down this unrealistic condition because to their own knowledge, they said, both the United States mission to the UN and the United States Central Intelligence Agency were infiltrated by Soviet agents. The would-be defectors were proposing to name these Soviet agents in American employ as proof of their bona fides, and part-payment for a safe haven in the United States.

Not surprisingly, Povl Bang-Jensen could not reach the President. The would-be defectors then agreed that he should deal with Mr. Allen W. Dulles, Director of CIA.

Mr. Bang-Jensen made repeated efforts to get in contact with Mr. Dulles, but without success. Finally, in growing desperation, the would-be defectors agreed that Bang-Jensen might explore the matter with a designated aide to Mr. Dulles. Contact was made, and a number of conferences, approximately eight, ensued. At this point, the aide to Mr. Dulles prepared a memorandum for record, summarizing his conversations with Bang-Jensen. This memorandum, of which several copies were made, reached certain other agencies of the government as well as CIA.

Not long thereafter the Soviet Government learned of the attempted Bang-Jensen liaison with United States authorities. The would-be defectors were returned to Russia.

Povl Bang-Jensen was pilloried in a vicious campaign of character assassination. Some United States officials participated in that campaign.

In 1958 Bang-Jensen engaged Robert Morris, former Chief Counsel of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, in a projected fight to secure his reinstatement at his UN post, from which he had been dismissed for refusal to give up the confidential list of Hungarian witnesses. Mr. Morris succeeded in get-

ting independent corroboration of enough of Bang-Jensen's story to convince him that "the Bang-Jensen case is bigger than the Hiss case."

Probably without Bang-Jensen's knowledge, the Central Intelligence Agency moved in the summer of 1958 to place Bang-Jensen's personal life and his search for a job under the observation and influence of its own covert employees.

Two weeks ago, following the nation-wide publicity which Lyle C. Wilson, head of the UPI Washington Bureau, gave to the Bang-Jensen case and to questions raised by NATIONAL REVIEW and Robert Morris, the Central Intelligence Agency, up to that point silent, issued a statement that its Director, Allen Dulles, did in truth confer with Povl Bang-Jensen, on 10 December 1957, and that Bang-Jensen gave Mr. Dulles no information concerning Soviet infiltration in either the United States mission to the UN or in CIA.

This statement is a misrepresentation, and must be presumed a deliberate CIA attempt to cover up its own derelictions in the case of Povl Bang-Jensen. The date of this alleged "conference" was nearly a year after Bang-Jensen had initiated his efforts to negotiate the defections. The "conference" was in fact a lunch in a residence, at which a number of persons, including journalists, were present. The social atmosphere was not one in which so sensitive a problem could have been discussed. There was no private talk between Bang-Jensen and Allen Dulles.

Simultaneously with the release of this statement, certain covert CIA employees and consultants who were associated with Bang-Jensen or his affairs prior to his death are revising, along lines bolstering the CIA statements' implications, what they have previously expressed concerning Bang-Jensen, his acts and his death.

Is a frantic and incompetent bureaucracy putting pressure on potential witnesses before the congressional inquiry which, under Senator Thomas Dodd's direction, the Internal Security Subcommittee is conducting into this affair?

Povl Bang-Jensen is dead. He died under mysterious circumstances, which have not been adequately explained or investigated. Many persons and many forces, not exclusively Soviet, had reason to breathe easier at his passing.

The Central Intelligence Agency is, at the very least, guilty of two grievous sins of the kind to which ingrown bureaucracies are prone: a sin of major omission, in failing to follow up, immediately and fully, the lead offered by Bang-Jensen's approach—even if that lead proved a false scent; a sin of shameless commission, in now trying to cover its own tracks at the expense of its country's interest and a brave man's honor.